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THE MAGIC LANTERN GAZETTE

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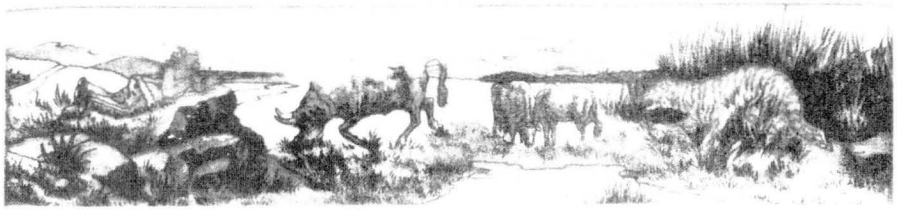

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COLLECTING CHILDREN'S MAGIC LANTERN SLIDES

By Lawrence Spencer, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

I have been interested in photography from the time I was in high school and joined the Photography Club. When in university the Single Lens Reflex Cameras first appeared, and in order to obtain them a friend and myself ordered our Pentax directly from Japan before they could be obtained here. At that time I also became fascinated with various types of antiques, and while attending a large antique show and sale I came across the first small box of children's magic lantern slides I'd ever seen. I bought them on a whim—soon realizing they were a precursor to photography and early versions of photography slides. I kept my eyes open for others with every visit to an antique shop or show and gradually built up a fair-sized collection. I think I must have exhausted every antique place for several hundred miles around for soon I could locate no more—so I started looking in other areas when on vacation or home on visits. Slowly I added to the collection, either by single slides, or less frequently with a set or box of slides. I became fascinated with the many and varied topics covered by the slides and looked for as many different or interesting types or topics I could find. Of course to obtain ones I did not have, I often had to buy a whole group which left me with duplicates of ones I already had. I figured if I ever came across another collector I could use these for trade. I have been collecting them for over 30 years.

For many years all I had was the slides until the marvelous day I came across my first toy magic lantern and realized this was what was used to project the slides. I had to have it no matter what the price! Over the years I came across several others of various shapes and designs and obtained them because they were part of the magic lantern set. I even managed to obtain one of the original boxes with the instructions pasted to the inside of the lid, but still remained more interested in the slides themselves—mainly due to the subject matter. Except for certain ones I could only guess at the stories behind many of the slides or partial sets I had. Many obviously served as travelogues showing scenes and subjects from around the world, told various stories, or showed people of many lands. Others appeared to be telling a fairy tale or lesson, or were just a slide version of a 'cartoon' with a funny ending where someone gets into trouble. In many ways most of them, it seemed, were used to teach a type of moral or lesson in a humorous way. I have never yet obtained any script which had obviously come with sets originally and were meant to be read along with the showing of the slides. I have seen a few sets for sale which had these scripts included, but were either beyond my budget or had many or all duplicate slides so that I did not purchase them. I have even occasionally asked sellers to photocopy these for me without success. I'm still looking!

One thing which amazes me is that these slides still exist in the numbers, and especially in the condition that they do. When one realizes that many of them were produced in the latter quarter of the 1800s, and are therefore now well over 100 years old, and were meant for kids to play with (and were glass!) it's a wonder that any are still around. It is very common to find them in various stages of what I would describe as poor shape—consisting

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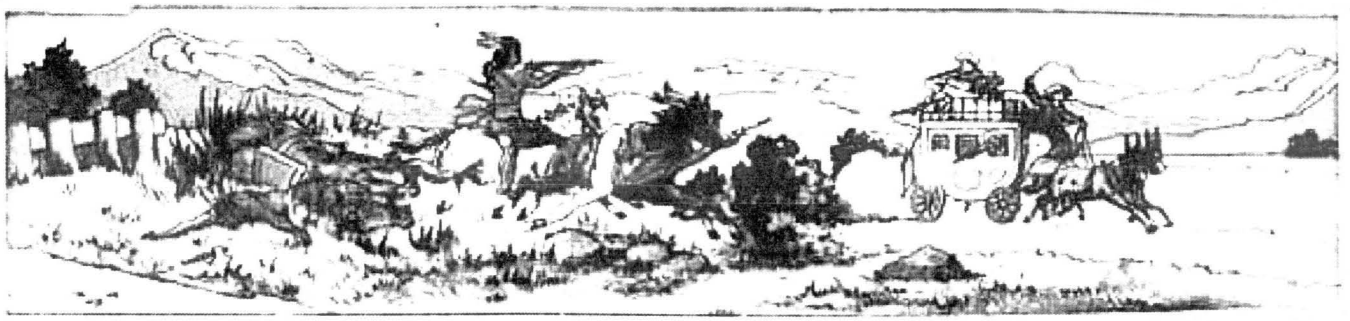


of torn or missing paper edges, scratches on the images, and especially covered with layers of soot (obviously from the smoke of the oil lamp used in the lantern). Rarely do you find a slide or set which is mint.

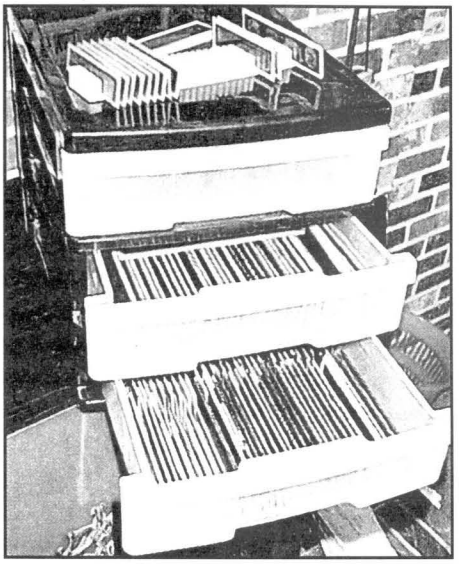
As with all antiques one wants to restore them to their original condition as much as possible without distracting from the 'antique' appearance. As such, I have always cleaned the slides, and found that the best way to remove the smoke or soot was to use good old Windex glass cleaner, sprayed onto soft paper toweling and very gently brushed over the slide—much more care taken with the side where the image is applied. It is amazing how much brighter and more colorful the image appears. Occasionally there has been a broken slide which I have 'fixed' by gluing with epoxy glue—figuring that it is at least better to keep the parts together and the slide fairly 'usable.'

The bulk of problems with the slides is the torn or missing paper edges used mainly, I presume, to protect kids from cuts on the glass edges. Obviously most of this loss was from the glue letting go over time, but also by being torn from repeated insertion and pushing through the metal slide holder of the lantern. This was also the primary cause of the scratching of the images themselves. I would very much like to repair the paper edges but as yet have not been able to find a source of the type of paper used for this purpose even after trying several sources in the magic lantern field as well as paper manufacturers. It probably isn't made any more. Any assistance in this area would be appreciated.

As I soon seemed to exhaust the supply of slides from areas I could easily reach I was extremely pleased to discover a few years ago the existence of eBay, the Internet auction site, where to my pleasant surprise people from around the world were offering these slides for sale. Since then this has been my main, if not sole, source of new acquisitions. In addition, I have also made some Internet pen-pals and friends of people I have "met" over transactions and further discussions on the net. This has become the easiest and best way to have access to a world of supply of all kinds of items as well as people who deal with magic lanterns. I have never been disappointed by any transaction I have made over the past few years. I also managed to sell all my duplicate slides, which subsidized my further purchases.

For a long time my collection was kept in all sorts of boxes in a cupboard. Then about two years ago I decided to take the plunge and sort and record them, mainly so that I would be able to tell if I had a particular slide already and didn't buy it again. Little did I know that this would turn into a four to five month task on evenings and weekends. This posed two problems: 1) how to record them and 2) how to store them in an organized way so they could be retrieved as desired. Well, for the first task, thank heavens for computers! This is just what computers were made for.

So I started a list on Microsoft Word, classifying them first by size of slide and then by images—those that had a full scene across the slide, followed by those with four, five or more images on the slide. To aid description I chose a standard of describing them by looking at the non-image (panorama) side,



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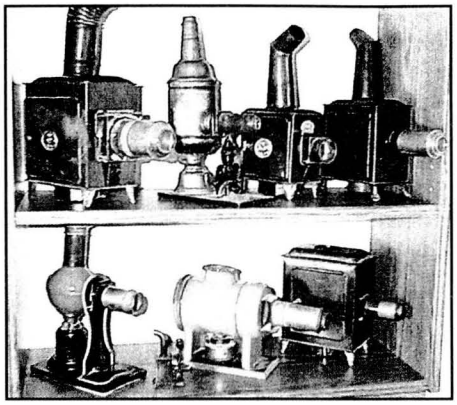
from left to right. I then used as few words as possible to describe the image or story as depicted across the slide or in each circle. In this way I ended up with a simple description listed down the 30-some pages. Now when I see a slide listed for sale and don't know if I have it, I simply call up the file and do a "find" search with a few different key words to describe the images, and can see if it's there, very quickly with great certainty. This system hasn't failed me yet. In fact, I can bring up my description in one box on the screen while having the scanned image of the slide from eBay (or anybody who sends it to me) in another above it and judge fairy accurately whether I already own it.

As to storage, this took a lot of thought and weighing of pros and cons. My final solution was to purchase sets of plastic file drawers from a business supply store. Then using fabricated wood (so there would be no grain where the wood could easily break) I cut strips about 1.5 inches wide, which fit either across (for small slides) or the length of the drawers (for the larger slides). Then I ran them through my table saw in pairs to cut a series of parallel grooves about 1/4 inch apart, and half way through the thickness, down the length of the strips. Then laying these two strips parallel in the bottom of the drawer they served as holders for both ends of the slides (much in the way of a name tag holder at a formal table setting). Then, numbering the grooves every ten, it was now easy to place the slides and retrieve them. I simply named the drawers T, M, and B (for top, middle, and bottom). Where sets exist, still in their original cardboard or wooden boxes, I describe all the slides as above but have kept them as a set in the boxes, simply placing the whole box in a drawer and noting the location.

Then in the computer list I put the designation of drawer and position opposite each slide. Thus a slide may be listed at M-12, meaning it was located in the middle drawer in slot #12 from the front. Voila!—a complete and easy way to search for a slide by description and fast retrieval, so that if need be I can pick out the slide to compare it to one depicted on the computer screen.

One other thing I have been doing is keeping a record of all types of lanterns and other related items that I come across on the Internet or on eBay, such as capturing the scanned images of items that people post with their listings. I save these images to a file and then later crop them and resize them and print them out in color. I then sort them by topic and keep them in a binder so that I have a reference of other items having to do with my collection. Even if I can't have the items I can have a picture of them.



One of my next plans is to build some sort of system to display the slides, so they can be enjoyed on a daily basis by myself and my family, as well as visitors. I hope to accomplish this by building a sort of modified picture frame box to hang on the wall, large enough to hold a dozen or so slides at a time with a light source behind. I want to design it so that there are openings into which various sized slides can be placed and then exchanged periodically so that over time many, if not most, of the slides can be viewed and enjoyed. I will place a switch on the plug cord so that the light may be turned on only when one wishes to view them, as I do not want to leave the light on for long periods, not knowing what long exposure to light might do to the images.

Of the hundreds of children's slides I now have, it would be difficult to choose the 'best slide' or most favorite. There are certainly some that are not so popular, although they do show the range and depth of topics these slides depicted. Others are whimsical or odd due to their unique subject matter, such as a "visit to the dentist's office," a great topic for kids in those days when dentistry was not the wonderful experience we know today! Many cover nursery rhymes and what must have been favorite characters or stories of the time. This is where the 'scripts' would come in handy, but I can see how these pieces of paper could have easily gotten misplaced except when one sees a complete set in the original box where the script is sometimes enclosed. Many others depict what appears to be 'geographical tours' of famous sites around the world such as pyramids and windmills, Arctic exploration, etc. are easily recognized. Others I have no idea as to location. Some of course could simply be the artists' and manufacturers' imagination. Many of these were produced in Germany and Europe in general. It is interesting, to say the least, to see how they interpreted other parts of the world or specific events. Some of these include various wars showing quite graphic and gruesome events taking place against the enemy (shooting, bayoneting, burning at the stake, chopping off heads, etc.). Who says there's too much violence for kids today?

I think if I had to pick the one I find most interesting it would have to be one of a group showing the "cowboys and Indians" of the American West. Many of these are also gruesome, showing both Indian raids on poor settlers as well as cowboys chasing down Indians. One of these in fact I have chosen to put on my personal letterhead. It depicts some Indians chasing and shooting at a stagecoach, while one Indian has been shot and is falling from his horse. But the one I'd pick as the best is due to the uniqueness of the subject matter. This one shows Indians hunting on the American plains—and one of the animals they are hunting appears to be a Bengal tiger, stripes and all. I guess this is just a fanciful idea by the German artist of what life must have been like in the American Wild West (maybe got mixed up with far east)! He probably just threw in whatever would have been considered a dangerous animal at that time. Maybe he was shooting for an American leopard or 'mountain lion?' Anyway, this gives you an idea of some of the weird and wonderful subjects to be found on these slides.

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Keep in mind these items were designed and sold as a toy for young children of the day. The labels and other images of the lanterns being used show young children, probably below ten or so, using them. Just picture it, kids of this age using oil burning lanterns and flame, sliding sheets of sharp edged glass in and out of a small space, and all in the dark! Can you just imagine a "toy" such as this being allowed on the market today? The Health and Safety people would have a field day, not to mention the safety warnings and restrictions! The fire department alone would go wild, let alone the children's ward of the hospital. One wonders just how many emergencies were actually experienced—or were the children better disciplined? After all, they were Victorian children.

Searching for, hunting down, and organizing these slides has been a good source of pleasure and at times frustration. My theory is that everyone needs a hobby. Maybe I just have too many things I want to do! I always enjoy carefully cleaning and going over a new acquisition, and describing and cataloging it. It has also allowed me to meet a number of great friends over time and has always proved a great conversation topic as, not too surprisingly, most people have not heard of these types of children's slides. At most they may be aware of the square black and white slides which were shown to audiences in church basements and halls such as temperance meetings, or as travelogues by traveling projectionists, an early pre-motion picture scenario. Most of these were indeed actual black and white photographs on glass slides and are more common and most often found.

When I have visitors and show them the slides they are completely and genuinely fascinated by the topics, the colors, and the uniqueness of them, probably never having seen anything like them before and realizing they are over 100 years old. At least they are so taken by it that they never appear to think it odd that a grown man has chosen to collect a kid's antique toy! I guess like me they realize that they are rather unique and view them simply as an early form of photography and slide show. One friend has even suggested she'd like to paint some of them as typical Victorian images for children.

One of my hopes is to get organized and have enough time to put on a small showing of the slides. I have yet to try projecting any myself with the lanterns I have. I am contemplating approaching the local city museum to see if they would like to put on a small display for a period so that visiting school children can see this type of toy. A friend of mine, an engineer, just recently displayed an item there. It was a scale model of one of the local shipbuilding cranes made from an antique Meccano set (honoring the 100th anniversary of Meccano). I'm sure many people would enjoy seeing the slides and lanterns and it would give me great pleasure to share the collection with others, as I have just shared it with you. I trust that after reading this you also learned something new and enjoyed sharing my fascination and fun with magic lantern slide collecting.

Ed. note: After writing about the dangers of children's lantern slides we heard a rumor that Larry is so concerned about safety he is considering a "recall" and having you turn in all your children's slides to him.

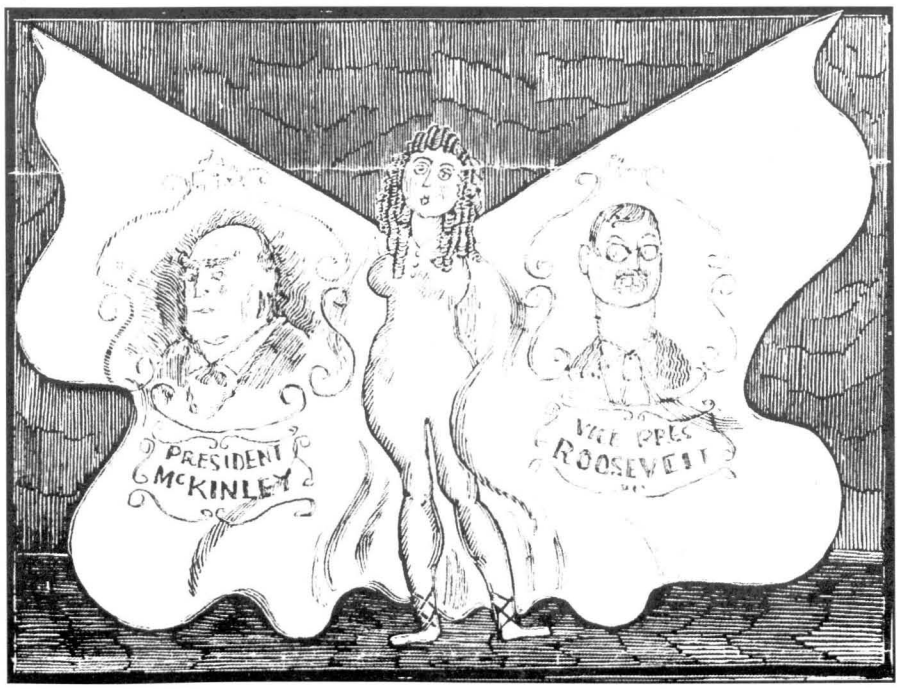
FROM THE PRESIDEN'T CORNER

By Ralph Shape

Spring has finally arrived. Hopefully, all have survived the rigors of winter. Here in the Northwest we continue to suffer the worst drought in our history. It's been so dry that the moss won't grow, there are no slugs in our garden, and the garden tools we forgot to bring in last winter haven't rusted.

We had an umbrella burning party last month but it was unsuccessful because of a burning ban and the threat of fines from the air quality people. Seems all of the rain went to California.

The wages of sin and other Victorian joys and sorrows, as seen and engraved by that old sentimentalist, John Held, Jr. (N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1972) – A reprint of the works of John Held, Jr. (N.Y.: Ives Washburn, c. 1931)
Submitted by Lindsey Lambert



When the theatre was fraught with romance. The startling innovation of the magic lantern slide in conjunction with the serpentine dance. Engraved by John Held, Jr. who is game to the core.

Unfortunately, in trade, they sent us their earthquakes. The recent sample on Ash Wednesday was quite a jolt. To the best of my knowledge no one suffered fallen lanterns or slides. Many businesses suffered significant damage but, overall, we were quite fortunate. Normalcy is returning.

Spring also means more flea markets, antique shows, garage sales, and auctions—all possible sources of material to add to our collections. Most of our collections involve magic lanterns and the many related fields. Perhaps the most valuable collection we as a society have is the people we attempt to bring together, gathered from far corners of the country and the world, people from diverse backgrounds who have a multitude of talents and interests. While our interests are widespread, we share one in common, that being the magic lantern. Holding this diverse group together is the function of our publication. It must serve the entire group but of course satisfying everyone all the time is a tough agenda. I would like to see a renewed emphasis on some of the original ideas of Joe Koch. In the very first issue in 1979 he suggested each issue contain personal experiences in collecting or giving shows; news updates on activities of members; a question and answer column for exchanging information; buy, sell or trade column; historical and technical articles. Every issue since that first includes a request for contributions. So here it is again. We'd all like to hear of your activities.

If you want to see an excellent article on lanterns with great pictures get a hold of last September's *New England Antiques Journal.* Jack Judson has again, promoted the hobby and the Society.

This spring meant another outing to England. The British Society hosted the magic lantern world at their sixth convention this year at a new location in England's second largest city, Birmingham. The theme was "Smoke, Fire, Ghosts & Spirits," all of which were creations the lantern used to astound and amaze it's audiences. Our congratulations to them for an entertaining, educational, and sometimes frightening event and also, our congratulations to them in celebrating the 25th anniversary of their founding.

See you all in Rochester next year. May your lantern shine brightly throughout the year.

ON PHOTOGRAPHIC LANTERN SLIDES

By Tom Rall

To specialize in photographic lantern slides it is certainly necessary to study the history of photography, of which our humble slides are an understudied genre. In so doing, one rapidly discovers that several other societies in the United States are devoted to various specific and general areas of photographic history.

Among these, I have found the National Stereoscopic Association (NSA) to be a primary source of related information. It publishes *Stereo World,* which features articles on photographers and publishers who often also produced lantern slides. NSA reproduces catalogs and publishes monotypes on the production of many of these, which are extremely helpful. NSA membership information is available by writing to P.O. Box 14801, Columbus, OH 43214, or on the web at: http://www.nsa-3d.org Another group is The Daguerreian Society. which publishes both a newsletter and an annual, in itself worth the price of membership. It can be reached at 3045 West Liberty Ave. #9, Pittsburgh, PA 15216, or: http://www.daugerre.org

The daguerreotype was a positive image produced without a negative. Therefore there is less overlap between it and lantern slides. But one soon finds that many daguerreotypists, as the first photographers and photographic technicians to establish a commercial base for their work, would move on to negative based imaging, including lantern slides. And from these early pioneers would arise the widely credited inventors of photographic lantern slides—Frederick and William Langenheim, German immigrant brothers who became daguerreotypers in Philadelphia. Interestingly, they are also credited with creation of the first stereoviews in America. I shall write more about my search for Langenheim slides in future issues of the *Gazette.*

Three other more general photographic historical societies are of note:

The Photographic Historical Society of New England (PHSNE) publishes a journal, which recently featured a story by our Past President Jack Judson, and hosts Boston area's photo shows twice a year. PHSNE can be reached at P.O. Box 650189, West Newton Station, MA 02465.

The American Photographic Historical Society (APHS), whose president is Bryan Ginns, also a member of our society, publishes *Phtogrpaphica* and holds meetings and photo shows in New York City. It maintains offices at 1150 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Neither PHSNE nor APHS presently have web sites.

The Photographic Historical Society is located at P.O. Box 10434, Rochester, NY 14610. It holds periodic symposia in conjunction with George Eastman House. The web site is: http://www.rit.edu/~andpph/tphs.html

Ed. note: This will be the site of our 2002 convention.

To specialize in photographic lantern slides, I am increasingly aware, it is also helpful to study the history of cinema. Recently I've been reading Charles Musser's *The Emergence of Cinema.* "The American Screen to 1907," a first volume in a History of the American Cinema by the University of California Press. Musser acknowledges several society members for their work in the field, including David Francis, X. Theodore Barber, Richard Balzer, and Terry Borton.

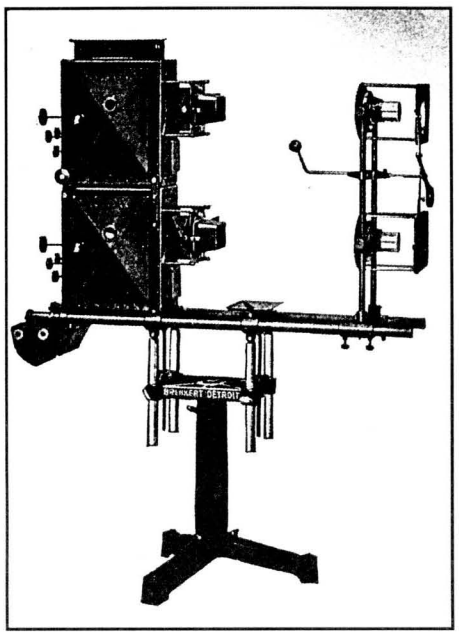
Acknowledgements of the work of other society members are found often. Sometimes they are unexpected, such as a tribute to Larry Rakow as a photographica dealer from William Darrah, a noted authority, in a book about *cartes de visite,* a popular photographic form that flourished in the 1860s and lasted for the remainder of the 19th century.

Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of beginning to study the history of the photographic lantern slide is the realization of how closely it intertwines with the development of related media. Certainly photography and cinema are two of the more evident. But so too are areas such as printing, advertising, photojournalism, and television.

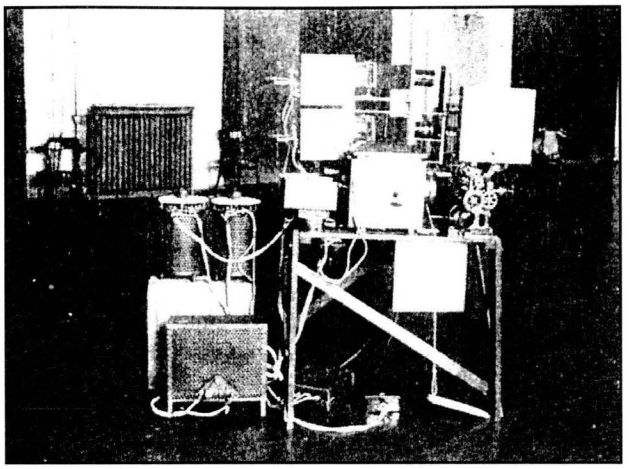
The lantern slide influenced them all.

BRENKERT "F2" LANTERN SLIDE PROJECTORS WITH FLOOR STAND

By J.P. Jenks

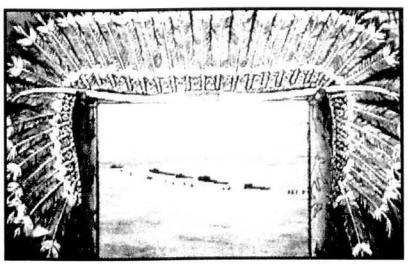


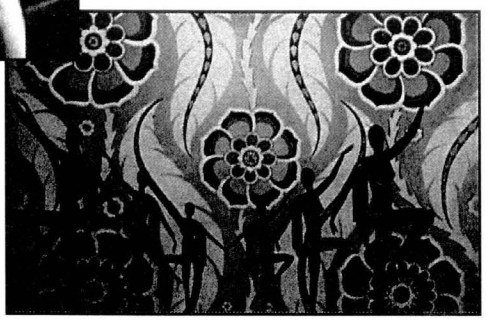
"Enclosed are some photographs that may be used in the *Magic Lantern Gazette.* The first is taken from a 1912 issue of *Moving Picture World.* The rig on the table includes a Power's #6 picture head in front, but behind it is a large, commercial grade stereopticon device with bellows. The next two pictures are from a 1929 catalog from the Brenkert Company of Detroit, showing their F200 theatre dissolving lantern slide projector, or stereopticon. I took a picture of the whole page, then a close-up of just the projector. Hope this information is of interest."



The Halls are fortunate enough to have a number of "special effect" slides in their collection that were manufactured by Brenkert and Worstel. They are all glass and are 4" x 5" and so cannot be shown in a standard projector. We first learned of the Brenkert projector pictured here, many years ago from Jack Judson, who also has one along with some slides, in his own collection.

Our slides all appear to have been used as backdrops for theater or vaudeville acts, probably projected from the rear. Colors are beautiful and many styles are art deco, dating them to the 1920s and 1930s. Interestingly, in some cases we have a glass negative, a black and white slide, and a colored slide all of the same scene. We obtained these slides years ago with one of our first major slide purchases. The fellow was so pleased that we bought all his lantern slides that he threw these in for free!



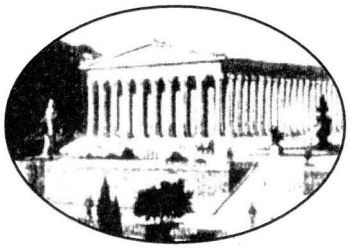


ONE COLLECTOR'S SEARCH FOR BEALE'S "THE SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD"

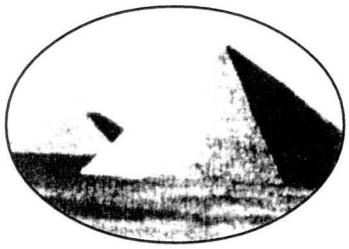
By Ken Berry

Perhaps some of the most cherished and sublime memories we ever have are those experiences we have as children . . . when life was simple and uncomplicated and when the mysteries and discoveries of the world were just beginning to open up to us.

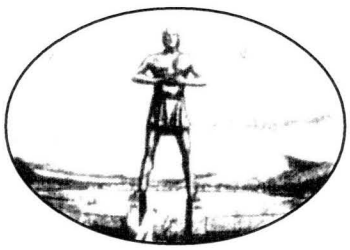
Such was my fascination as a seven-year-old in 1947 when I was flipping through the pages of an old Compton's Pictured Encyclopedia and was stopped cold at the stunning pictures of *The Seven Wonders of the World*. What strange and marvelous creations man had built centuries ago and which were now all but dust and fragments, save for one. To add to my fascination and mystery, the illustrations were unlabeled as to the artist or source. It was as though these artistic creations were as much an enigma as the monuments themselves . . . their creator also lost to posterity.



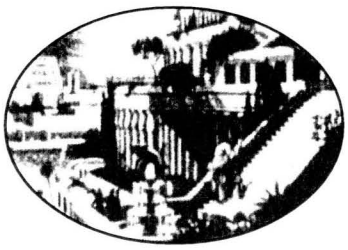
The Temple of Diana at Ephesus



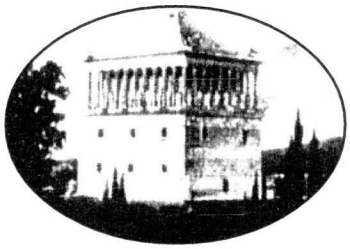
The Pyramids of Egypt



The Colossus of Rhodes

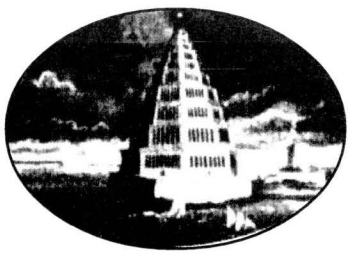


The Hanging Gardens of Babylon



The Tomb of King Mausolus at Halicarnassus

The Statue of Zeus on Olympus



The Pharos of Alexandria

Some 41 years later, in 1988, as I once again dusted off these old volumes, I came across these friends from my childhood. The old engravings as sharp and mysterious as when I first saw them, daring me to unravel their secret. For the past ten years this I have attempted to do.

My original letters to Compton's Encyclopedia were fruitless. They had no information as to the artist or source of the original works. Their supplier for the illustrations was the Bettmann Archives, which was of no help either, except for the curt reply to my letter, "We do not loan our fragile glass negatives to individuals." This only added to the mystery of why the illustrations would be on glass plates instead of today's photo negatives.

Years passed as I reviewed any and every book I could locate on *The Seven Wonders of the World* . . . and believe me, there are tons of them. Some very imaginative artists over the years have come up with some really wild depictions of these vanished effigies. But none I have seen are as spectacular as the originals of my unknown artist.

Finally, in 1988, as I was reading a 1938 book called *Richard Halliburton's Second Book of Marvels of the Orient* I saw it! Under a magnificent print of the all too familiar *Hanging Gardens of Babylon* was this note: "after a drawing by Joseph Boggs Beale, courtesy Modern Galleries, Philadelphia." My shout in the otherwise peaceful library caused a momentary stir, but I was elated and felt I had at last found some long lost secret. But, who was this Joseph Boggs Beale, and why were his illustrations on glass plates?

The Modern Galleries in Philadelphia turned out to be not a museum, but a long closed antique store. But the Philadelphia Public Library was most cooperative in unraveling the mysterious Mr. Beale for me.

In 1935, in Philadelphia, an old trunk was discovered in an attic containing 1,676 original black and white drawings of the prolific

continued page 8

Seven Wonders of the World continued

magic lantern artist Joseph Boggs Beale (1841-1926). These drawings, dating from 1880 to 1900 comprised almost every topic imaginable, but with an emphasis on American history. The drawings were uniformly on light gray paper 13" x 13" with illustrations in various shades of black paint. A great grand nephew of Betsy Ross, Beale was a professor of art at Central High School in Philadelphia, and an illustrator for *Frank Leslie's Weekly* and *New York Graphic Magazine* before turning to magic lantern style art.

Beale's employer, Casper W. Briggs, sold all of the original art to Modern Galleries, who in turn, sold most of it to The American National Insurance Company of Galveston, Texas. The original art for *The Seven Wonders of the World* was among this collection, and from sale catalogs of the era, can be dated ca. 1898. Many of Beale's drawings can still be seen today around desks of employees of The American Insurance Company. But the elusive *Seven Wonders of the World* were sold to an employee who gave them to different friends as gifts. Presumably, they are still in private collections, and it seems unlikely that they will ever be reunited again in a single collection.

In my research, I was fortunate to learn of the Magic Lantern Society whose members have been of invaluable help in providing information about Beale and his works. In fact, member Terry Borton is writing the definitive biography on Beale and his art which is anxiously awaited by Beale's admirers.

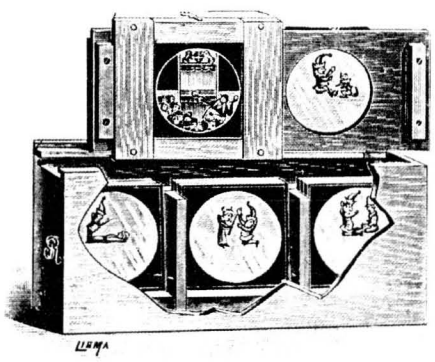
The impressively colored magic lantern slides, although produced in the hundreds, seem to be almost as elusive as the original drawings. The George Eastman House had Beale's *Seven Wonders* in their extensive collection, but upon requesting a photocopy they were discovered to be missing. Although I have been searching for years, I have only found five of the slides . . . *The Pyramids of Egypt* I have never seen and I have not been able to determine which of two versions I have of *The Colussus of Rhodes* is actually by Beale.

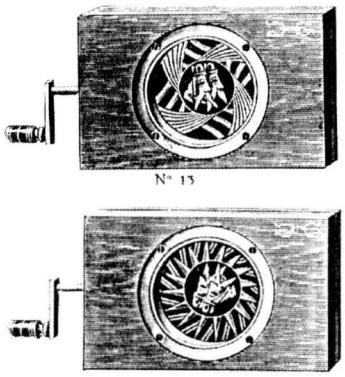
To my great surprise and enjoyment, Beale's works are still being enjoyed today by a new generation of admirers. In 1997 Cuba issued a set of postage stamps depicting Beale's masterpieces *The Seven Wonders of the World,* as illustrated in this article. Once again though in a different medium, the world can see this truly great American artist's magnificent works.

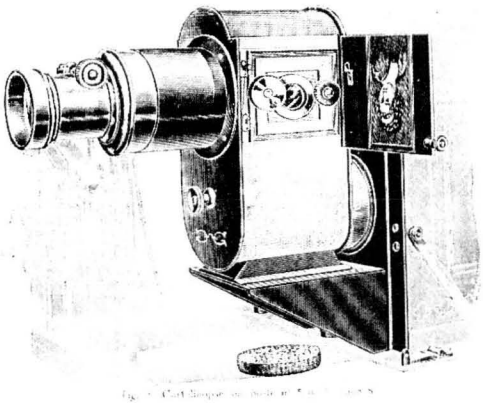
This writer would be most grateful to hear from any reader who has either illustrations or actual glass slides of Beale's *The Seven Wonders of the World*. I would still like to verify if these illustrations of *The Colossus of Rhodes* and *The Pyramids of Egypt* are from the set by Beale. Please contact me at: Ken Berry, 7513 Clayton Drive, Oklahoma City, OK 73132.

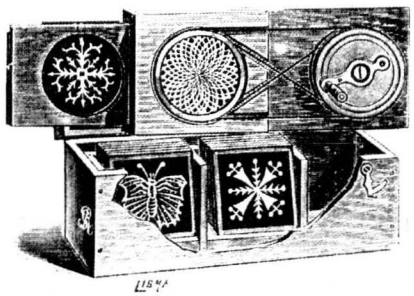
ARE THESE IN YOUR COLLECTION YET?

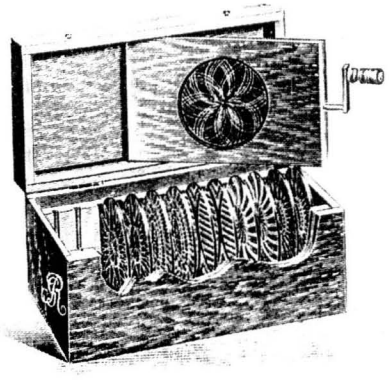
If not, you may want to order these items from the 1914-15 catalog of the Paris firm, G. Gilbert. Thanks to Alan Kattelle for sending along these interesting "teasers."

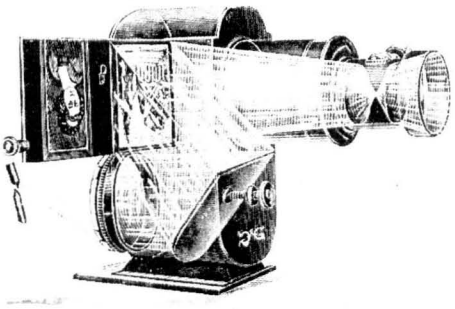












THE JUNE 2000 SMITHSONIAN

By Bob Bishop

Upon occasion the editors of our society publication offer a book or magazine review. Not that these few paragraphs I have sent constitute a review, but rather they zero in on two articles that pertain to the interest of magic lantern enthusiasts. Many of us who cannot afford to search and buy old original prints often by chance come across magazines of days gone by with adds and articles of the magic lantern. So it is not unusual to find in our little collections such magazines as old issues of *The Saturday Evening Post, Country Gentlemen, Good Old Days,* and *The Smithsonian,* all of which have carried information on the magic lantern. This is not to forget the old trade catalogues such as the Sears Roebuck catalogues of the turn of the century.

Such an issue as mentioned above is the June 2000 edition of *The Smithsonian*. This copy has two lengthy well-illustrated and nicely written articles that concern information of the world the lantern springs from. The issue will go into my own small collection and the information would grace the finest collections.

First there is a lengthy article about the English Narrowboats, such as Doug and Anita Lear utilized during the 1980s and early 1990s when they were considered to be the elite of lanternists around the world. These Narrowboats or Fly boats as described by the author, Susan Hornik, are also known as Buty boats. The article describes how important they were in that transition time when England was changing to the industrial base as it exists today. It tells of how the canals were begun and how they grew until most every major river in the country was connected by 7 1/2 foot by 8 foot deep waterways.

The article was of interest to me for it illustrates the harsh conditions early showmen contended with during their years on canal boats. They had to deal with canal ice in the wintertime, inoperative canal locks, and/or falling water levels. And this did not take into consideration uncaring port managers who in those earlier days did not see the worth of traveling lanternists, Punch and Judy Shows, or puppet programs, and often required them to berth out on the edge of towns and festivals. Living conditions must have been primitive with cramped quarters due to magic lantern equipment and seating space for the audience.

In Susan Hornick's article, it describes and illustrates how the Narrowboats are now welcomed at villages and festivals. Among them is a floating tea room operated by a Val Todd. Beautifully painted, her tea room is known at "The Moonraker Floating Tea Room." Also on the canals is a lady ventriloquist who gives shows on her Buty boat, which I have a suspicion is "The Carina," complete with a theater seating arrangement. This was the first Lear boat. The second Lear vessel burned sometime after it was sold.

So, even if the Lears and other entertainers of earlier decades may have been treated as if they were tinkers or gypsies and made to berth at the edge of towns, still they sowed the seed that led to a revival of interest in the canals and an acceleration of the reconstruction of many of the old waterways.

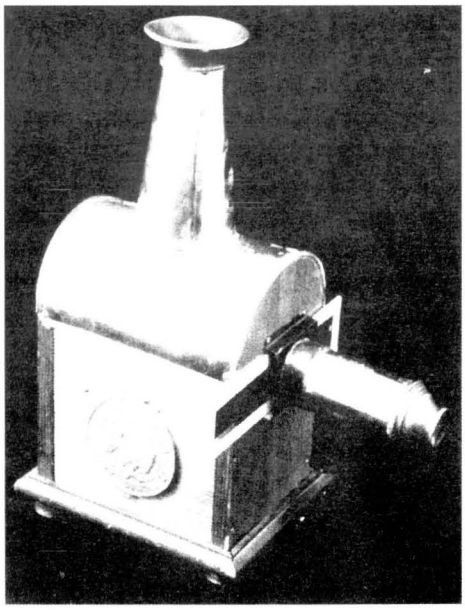
The second article is entitled "The Amazing Author of Oz." Written by Bruce Watson, it is a comprehensive story of L. Frank Baum and his lifetime, how he evolved from a storekeeper, failed actor, and reporter, into a beloved figure and author of children's tales. It tells of his output of more than seventy children's books.

Early members of this society may well remember Leora Wood Wells' series of articles regarding "The Wizard of Oz" and the possibility it might have been written for the magic lantern.

The Smithsonian article came just at the time that one of Baum's earlier stories, "The Patch Work Girl," was shown at our convention in Hollywood, an example of the staying power of Baum's wonderful stories.

Always searching for a way to make his living, L. Frank Baum dressed in a white frock and toured the midwest vaudeville circuit with his "Fairylogue and Radio Plays." With a red carnation pinned on his white frock, he told his well-known stories and at the same time various characters from his "Land of Oz" stories stepped out of hand-colored slides being projected on the screen. I do not know if Leora Wood Wells in her articles actually knew of these facts but her surmise, that somehow, there had to be a connection between "The World of Oz" and the magic lantern was entirely correct.

In 1897 Baum wrote his sister something every magic lantern person should take to heart. "When I was young I longed to write a great novel that should win me fame. Now that I am getting old my first book is written to amuse children. For, aside from my evident inability to do anything 'great.' I have learned to regard fame as a will-o-the-wisp which, when caught, is not worth the possession; but to please a child is a sweet and lovely thing that warms one's heart and brings its own reward." I certainly agree and that is good enough for—The Old Projectionist.



MEMBERS IN THE SPOTLIGHT

AMERICAN MAGIC LANTERN THEATER BREAKS HASKELL OPERA HOUSE RULES

Newport Daily Express, June 12, 1998
Submitted by Terry Borton

"You know that the Haskell breaks all the rules, but this time, it will also break an old internal rule. In a letter in the archives of the Library & Opera House written December 9, 1911 by Ora Carpenter (our first librarian) we read, "We have always refused to entertain a proposition made by Moving Picture or Magic Lantern men, and shall continue to do so." But the Haskell Opera House (Stanstead, Qu-Derby Line) will dare to present The American Magic Lantern Theater and a Victorian Summertime Magic Lantern Show on Friday, June 12 at 7:30 p.m.

At the turn of the century, before movies, TV, or videos, there was the magic lantern (in this case a 1890s projector) by which dazzling color slides were projected on a full-sized screen.

The slides of The Magic Lantern Theater illustrate Victorian stories, comedy, and song in celebration of summer. These are dramatized by a costumed showman and a singer. The audience also plays a major part providing sound effects and joining in sing-alongs. As a tribute to the multi-cultural heritage of the Haskell Opera House, this show will feature the story of Evageline, an Acadian maiden."

Terry reports that the ban on magic lantern shows was because of the possibility of fire. Fortunately, The American Magic Lantern Theater performance came off without incident—not even an international one. Terry says the opera house straddles the boarder. He and the magic lantern were in the U.S., Nancy and the screen were in Canada.

For a current schedule of shows for The American Magic Lantern Theater go to www.magiclanternshows.com

Lindsay Lambert and his Magic Lantern

Valley Tales, October 2000
By Mary Cook

Lindsay Lambert is doing everything in his power to keep history alive. The Ottawa resident is the proud owner of an old fashioned magic lantern, and even though the lantern is at least 50 years older than he is, his background in stage lighting gives him a very real appreciation of the intricacies of the antique, and the era which saw the magic lantern's birth. And to audiences of just about every age group, Lambert has opened up the pages of history with his entertaining and unique "slide shows."

He saw the magic lantern in an antique store about 18 years ago and his interest was piqued. It was in "rather sad condition" he says, but with years of experience in antique restoration, he was able to return the lantern to its original glory. He has also acquired dozens of slides over the years.

For those of us who have fond memories of Magic Lantern Shows in church basements when we were very young, all we remember is the excitement of sitting on straight back chairs watching images being projected on walls, and listening to someone give a talk on what we were seeing. Lambert has added a new dimension to an old idea. Not only does he show the slides, he sings, talks and gives his own unique sound effects to bring the images to life. He even snores in one of his favorite presentations, much to the delight of his young audiences.

The simple concept of the magic lantern hasn't changed over the years since its invention in the 1650s, reaching the height of its popularity in the mid 1800s. Most of the slides are just single images, but there are some slides in 4 x 7 inch mahogany frames which have sliding glass slips or levers or cranks, which change the picture in some way, or provide the illusion of movement. Lambert can have dogs jump through hoops, scenery move and, in one slide, a boar's head on a serving tray is replaced with that of the waiter!

Magic lanterns were very popular until the advent of movies. "When movies were first invented, they were considered just an extension of the magic lantern," Lambert explains.

The lantern sits on a table, much like a slide projector does today, and the images are projected on a screen or wall. Lambert has about 70 still slides and about 15 of the moving variety, and the show he presents, alive with all his sound effects, takes about 1 1/4 hours to present.

He has shown his one-man show to a variety of groups. His latest presentation took him to New London, Connecticut, where he entertained the Rushlight Club, a Lighting History Society. He is a member of the Magic Lantern Society of the United States and Canada. As well, he is a member of the Magic Lantern Society based in Great Britain.

Lambert is interested in anything to do with lighting, and studied theatre at the University of Victoria in British Columbia. His keen interest in lighting saw him develop unique spotlights and especially the use of lime-light for staging. He continued to research this form and has built a reputation as an authority on forms of gas and other pre-electrical stage lighting.

His magic lantern was originally sold with a four wick kerosene lamp. He has fitted it with a 100 watt halogen lamp, which fits a socket and reflector assembly, which must be a big improvement over the original lighting.

The slides Lambert uses include many which are more than 150 years old, with some dating as recently as 1910. It's the old types that draw the most interest, and he is always seeking old slides to add to his repertoire.

He is also a member of the Magic Lantern Showman's Association of Eastern Ontario. He laughs when he says he is the Chairman of the Board. His sense of humor surfaces again when he says he is also the Club's sole member.

BITS AND PIECES

The Hollyhocks, September 13

Dear Mr. Bishop,
Responding to your inquiry about the "praties," I can do no better than refer you to this old song:

"She was just the kind of creature, bhoy
That Nature did intend
To walk throughout the world, me bhoys,
Without the Grecian Bend
Nor did she wear a chignon
I'd have you all to know;
And I met her in the garden
Where the praties grow"

Aubrey has been waiting for a long time for such a colleen to pass through his potato patch, but I feel that these things are not to be!

Yours very truly,
Gladys Twinkle

Editors Note: See "Reading" written by David Brooke in last Gazeette *issue.*

WANT ADS

For Sale

Magic lantern slides for sale. Some song slides, advertising, and various other subjects. Please call Jean Corcoran at 503-244-5605.

Wanted

Slides 3 1/4" x 4" produced by T.H. McAllister, 1920s, depicting the life of Christ. We are looking for B/W, numbered 1-48, with the title of original art and artist's names. All are Old Masters, 16th-18th Century. We are missing 12 of the set and would like to complete it. Ana and Daniel Gabriel, 1469 E. 53rd St., Brooklyn, NY 11234; e-mail: dragonfly007@msn.com; fax: 718-209-2134. Titles we need (if known):
2. The Angels Appearing to the Shepherds
4. The Magi Guided by the Star
7. The Flight into Egypt
16. Unknown
19. Christ Walking on the Waters
22. The Prodigal Son – The Carousal
24. The Prodigal Son – The Return
25. Unknown
29. Christ the Outcast of the People
33. Christ Weeping Over Jerusalem
36. Christ Rejected
45. Unknown
46. Easter Morn
49. Jacob's Well
50. Bethlehem – "House of Bread"
51. Nazareth
52. Sea of Galilee

Wanted

Where Did The Dissolve Go? By Dick Moore: I'm sure my collection of dissolving slides is very similar to many of yours, a few sets of both dissolve slides, and a lot of slide A, but no B, or B, but no A. The following is a list of my partial sets.
- The Christian Graces, View A (Hicks)
- The Martyred Christian – The Victim
- Niagara Falls – View of the falls in daylight with people in foreground
- Believers Vision, View B (Brooks)
- Gone – The Empty Crib, View B (Brooks)
- Ill fated ship – I have view B; Among the icebergs & C; Ship on Fire, looking for A
- Schoolboys first cigar, View A; This is an extra, ready for trade.

Perhaps someone in the society has one of the missing ones that they might want to sell, or, even better, perhaps trade so we both end up with a complete set. Please feel free to contact me at 203-457-1945, e-mail: rmoore0438@aol.com or snail mail 259 Fitch Hill Rd., Guilford, CT 06437. Looking forward to resolving some dissolves.

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Thank You
FOR YOUR
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If you like our Show
tell your friends
and come again

The Bigger
and Better
CHEVROLET
They're here -
smooth, swift,
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We'll demonstrate
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